

## Stopping Your Dog From Jumping Up (Without Taking The Spring Out of Their Step)

**Down Spot! Down Princess! Down Rover! Down Peaches! ... Down Comet! Down Cupid! Down Donder and Blitzen!** I've heard that command many times, from many desperate dog owners, directed at many determined dogs. The jumping dog is a universal problem, but a better understanding of what's motivating the behavior can go a long way toward addressing it.

### The Two Reasons Why Dogs Jump Up On People

**First, and probably most common, is the jumping dog who greets this way.** This can simply be from over-excitement - they "jump for joy." Dog behaviorists also point out that jumping behavior is partly instinctive. Dogs lick each others faces when they want to give a super nice greeting, a likely reflection of lower ranking members of a wolf pack licked the faces of the higher ranking wolves returning from the hunt. In addition, puppies in a den jump over one another for their mother's attention. More specifically, puppies target their mother's face, as a she typically regurgitates food for her litter, another reflection of the wolf pack.



**Also, this behavior can be positively reinforced during greeting times,** when a jumping dog is met by an excited owner who immediately praises, feeds, walks and/or plays with their pet after getting "jumped," so to speak. Jumping becomes part of this routine. It is rewarded and reinforced.

**A second reason for jumping, which is less commonly the case, is that they may be trying to establish dominance.** Dogs jump up on each other through what's known as "teeing off." In particular, they rest their head or paw (or both paws) on the shoulder of a dog they want to dominate and exert a bit of downward pressure. Because we walk on two legs, we're more difficult to tee off on, but the motivation is the same. The dog may be trying to express dominant status. In these cases, they often jump up once and more or less lean on you.



### Identifying Dominant Behavior

**It's important to identify this behavior by seeing it in the broader context of your relationship.** First, realize that a disobedient dog isn't necessarily a dumb one. If they don't listen to you, and push and pull you around, they may have decided not to recognize you as their superior in the pack hierarchy (while still thinking the world of you as a companion!). Whether it's male or female, a dog that consistently jumps on you may be exhibiting one of many behaviors of the signs of Alpha dog. (Alpha dog behavior is something we tackle in the Secrets to Dog Training Bonus book, "Secrets to Becoming the Alpha Dog," and there's a full DVD devoted to the topic in our "Dog Training DVD Series").

**If you suspect that the jumping is in fact an expression of dominance, then it is likely that your training will need to involve heavier corrections.** This just means you might need to do more than simply ignore the dog while jumping and train them to Sit and Settle before getting your attention. For instance, water squirting, sharp "growling," or even forcing the dog down and holding them down until they are still are all corrections that will short circuit this behavior.

**Some dog owners don't mind when their dog jumps up to greet them - it is a most a dramatic and flattering hello to say the least.** And the last thing we want to do is convince our pets that they have no reason to be excited to

see us. We don't want to take the spring out of their step, so to speak.

**But when the same dog jumps up on others, such as other family members or friends, it can be awkward and even dangerous.** A dog jumping up on strangers is always a bad look. The good news is a well-trained dog can learn to jump up only when "invited" to do so by its owner. This is fine for playtime for instance. But let's learn the rules before we break them.

## Laying Down The Rules

**During greetings, always try to prevent your dog from jumping up in the first place.** Put your hand (or both hands) out in front of you and hold still. A trained dog will be able to respond to this gesture reasonably quickly with repetitions. As with any training technique, do not introduce any verbal commands UNTIL the correct behavior has been demonstrated. Only when your dog gets down on his own accord should you start using the "down" command to accompany the behavior. This is how they learn the command, by having the right action to associate it with.

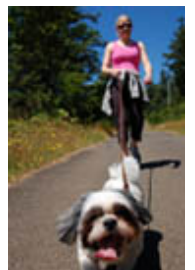
**For most, this type of prevention does not work right away, especially for puppies that lack enough formal training.** You'll have to know how to react when your dog starts jumping up. Mostly, this involves knowing what NOT to do. For example, when you have a problem jumper, don't be over-enthusiastic during your greetings. This obviously reinforces the behavior. And do not forcefully push the dog away from you. They interpret this as a form of playful engagement. The result: dogs always push back. It's instinctive. The same principle is the reason for the majority of cases where dogs pull on leashes: they are encouraged by the force exerted on them.

**Turn your back and ignore the dog.** And calmly ask him to sit. When he has calmed down, and ideally responded to the sit command, then you can turn and greet the dog. If he starts jumping again, repeat the process. Be patient, this is where you get to send a message mainly through your body language, and the dog will surely take several trials to receive it. Often it is recommended that you stick your knee up and put the dog off balance, which is almost a reflex reaction. Turning your back and stonewalling is better if you can manage.

**One of the absolute best suggestions I give is to always greet a calm dog "at its level."** Squat or kneel down, and open your palms open toward the dog. This is a non-threatening posture that dogs very quickly associate will impending praise. We all like when others try to meet us on our level. Dogs are no different in this respect. But make sure they earn it first!

**Avoidance is your best bet when introducing new people into your house.** If you have established your position as the dominant member of your pack, then your dog should never be allowed to position himself in front of you when the front door opens. It's time for you to become the Alpha Dog if that's the case, which also means more training for you. It is good practice to give a calm and firm "stay Down" warning in advance just before you open the door for a visitor or let them into the house. Your dog will be responding to your sense of composure and assertiveness, and start to truly believe that there is no real reason to freak out every time the door opens.

**If you have tried everything to get your dog to stop jumping up on everyone, short of removing its legs, I only have one more word for you.** Exercise. I've said it before and I'll say it again, dogs need more exercise than we think they do, and if they have no other outlet for their energy, they will find one, and that may include jumping up and down on people uncontrollably. So keep those legs and lungs pumping. If you can't be bothered going for those walks, you better have a good arm for fetch.



That concludes the first installment of your Secrets to Dog Training 6 Day Course. Join me next time when I answer a question that has plagued dog owners since the beginning of time:

**"Why is My Dog Ignoring My Commands?"**

Until then,

*Daniel Hevens*

Secrets to Dog Training : [click here](#)

**P.S.** Did you know that we've got a Special Offer for Subscribers to the Secrets to Dog Training 6 Day Course? (That's you). Check it out at: [click here](#)

**P.P.S.** Here's what some of our customers have said about Secrets to Dog Training...

## Success Story: Dr. Stanley Hyman

"Hi Daniel, Our Bichon, Jasmine, is a very friendly little dog who loves everyone she meets and shows it by jumping up on them. By following the instructions in your Secrets to Dog Training book, we were able to control her jumping."

**-- Dr. Stanley Hyman (Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada)**



## Success Story: Cynthia Muir and Cara

My dog Cara, thrives on the consistent messages I give her and she has of lots fun performing the tricks I teach her...

**-- Cynthia Muir (New Zealand)**

**P.P.P.S.** About Secrets to Dog Training...

With over 25,743 customers (and counting), Secrets to Dog Training: Dog Training to Stop Your Dog's Behavior Problems is the premier product of Kingdom of Pets. This comprehensive guide is written by renowned dog trainer Daniel Stevens, who currently heads the Kingdom of Pets dog training and obedience team.

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